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Congressman Childers Praises Legislative Efforts towards Increased Fiscal Responsibility, Transparency

January 7, 2009

Washington, DC - Congressman Travis Childers (D-MS) today applauded the House and Senate's efforts to increase government fiscal responsibility and transparency. His praise came in response to new steps to cut earmarks and provide further disclosure, as well as improvements in pay-as-you-go (PAYGO) rules.

"Congress' efforts to improve fiscal discipline and transparency are essential steps in the right direction towards reaching a more commonsense policy for government spending," said Congressman Childers. "I applaud both the House and Senate's efforts to make our government more accountable to the American people, especially during this time of economic crisis.

"I have previously stated that I am more than willing to end earmarks if all 434 of my colleagues are willing to do the same. Until then, I am intent on ensuring that Mississippi receives its fair share of federal funding. I am very pleased that the House and Senate Appropriations Committees yesterday showed their commitment to cutting earmarks. I look forward to taking further steps to reduce earmark spending, and will continue to fight for North Mississippi's share of what is available."

House Appropriations Chairman David Obey (D-WI) and Senate Appropriations Chairman Daniel Inouye (D-HI) yesterday announced the following three changes to increase transparency and reduce funding levels for earmarks:

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Require Members to post earmark requests on their Web sites;

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Provide early public disclosure by requiring the availability of earmark tables during subcommittee markups rather than full committee markups; and

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Cut the overall level of earmarks to 50 percent of the 2006 level for non-project-based accounts. FY 2008 spending bills were previously cut 43 percent from the FY 2006 level. Earmarks will be held below one percent of discretionary spending in subsequent years.

"As a member of the fiscally conservative Blue Dog Coalition, I am proud of Congress' decision to reform PAYGO rules in order to reduce our tremendous national deficit," said Congressman Childers. "These changes indicate that House leadership is continuing to listen to and act on the Blue Dogs' calls for a balanced budget."

Yesterday, the House passed important changes to PAYGO in this year's Rules package, including the following:

- Aligning House and Senate PAYGO rules to prevent delays and ensure that both chambers use the same Congressional Budget Office baselines.
- Requiring justification for emergency exceptions to PAYGO in a bill's legislative history. This justification is subject to a vote before actual consideration of the bill.

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